

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 OTTAWA 03127 212142Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /071 W
-----014526 212153Z /70
P 212130Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7811
ALL CANADIAN POSTS POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE OTTAWA 03127

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: INITIAL REACTION TO CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS

REF: OTTAWA 3082

1. EARLY REACTION BY MEDIA AND OPPOSITION POLITICIANS TO TRUDEAU GOV'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM LEGISLATION (REFTEL) REVEALED DIFFICULTY IN ABSORBING ELEMENTS OF THE PACKAGE FOR QUICK COMMENT. PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE (PC) LEADER JOE CLARK GAVE PRELIMINARY AND CAUTIOUS APPROVAL, NOTING THAT HOUSE OF THE FEDERATION PROPOSAL INCORPORATES MANY FEATURES OF TORY PROPOSAL FOR A HOUSE OF THE PROVINCES. NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) LEADER ED BROADBENT WAS LESS CHARITABLE, LABELLING THE PROPOSED UPPER HOUSE AN "ABSURD ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PROPOSAL." HE CALLED IT A "HOUSE OF PATRONAGE".

2. JUNE 21 MONTREAL GAZETTE, TORONTO GLOBE & MAIL, AND LE DEVOIR GAVE LEGISLATION FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE WHICH WAS LARGELY DESCRIPTIVE. LE DEVOIR PAID PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO LINGUISTIC GUARANTEES IN BILL OF RIGHTS AND SO-CALLED "DOUBLE MAJORITY" REQUIREMENT IN UPPER HOUSE ON MEASURES
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 OTTAWA 03127 212142Z

OF SPECIAL LINGUISTIC SIGNIFICANCE. EMBASSY NOTE: DOUBLE MAJORITY FEATURE WOULD REQUIRE MAJORITY OF BOTH ENGLISH-SPEAKING AND FRENCH-SPEAKING MEMBERS IN UPPER HOUSE ON MATTERS DESIGNATED AS OF SPECIAL LINGUISTIC SIGNIFICANCE, PROVIDING AN ADDED SAFEGUARD FOR LINGUISTIC MINORITY.
END COMMENT.

3. LE DEVOIR EDITORIAL NOTED THAT LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE DOES NOT ADDRESS WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR QUEBEC, "A DIFFERENT STATUS WITHIN FEDERATION", BUT ASSERTED THAT THE PACKAGE, ON OTHER HAND, DOES NOT PRECLUDE POSSIBILITY OF PROGRESS IN THAT DIRECTION. GLOBE & MAIL COLUMNIST GEOFFREY STEVENS WROTE THAT "IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW THE GOVERNMENT, HAD IT TRIED, COULD HAVE DEVISED A SYSTEM MORE CUMBERSOME, MORE CONDUCTIVE TO DISCORD, THAN IT HAS IN SOME OF THE KEY COMPONENTS OF THIS LEGISLATION." COLUMNIST CHARLES LYNCH, IN MONTREAL GAZETTE, SUGGESTED THAT PM TRUDEAU MIGHT HAVE POLITICAL MOTIVES FOR THE LEGISLATION. HE NOTED THAT "WHAT WE HAVE HERE, THEN, IS A SET OF PROPOSALS, STAGGERING IN THEIR SCOPE, OFFERED BY A GOVERNMENT THAT IS IN THE FINAL STAGES OF ITS MANDATE. IT IS A GOVERNMENT THAT IS TRYING, BY EVERY MEANS, TO BOLSTER ITS FALTERING POLITICAL FORTUNES." ON SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT NOTE, GAZETTE CARRIED FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE WHICH POINTED TO FEAR AMONG SOME LIBERALS THAT TORIES WOULD TAKE OVER NEW UPPER HOUSE. AT JUNE 20 PRESS CONFERENCE, TRUDEAU CONCEDED THIS POSSIBILITY BUT CLAIMED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ATTEMPTING TO REVISE A CONSTITUTION AND NOT SIMPLY ADVANCE LIBERAL PARTY FORTUNES.

4. ELECTRONIC MEDIA GAVE CONSTITUTIONAL BILL LEAD COVERAGE, WITH DESCRIPTION OF LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE AND SOME INTERVIEWS. CTV EVENING NEWS JUNE 20, FOR EXAMPLE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 03127 212142Z

INCLUDED INTERVIEW WITH PC LEADER JOE CLARK, AND CBC SHOW, "AS IT HAPPENS", INCLUDED DISCUSSION WITH NDP MEMBER STANLEY KNOWLES, WHO IS AUTHORITY ON PARLIAMENTARY RULES. KNOWLES WAS CRITICAL OF NEW UPPER HOUSE PROPOSAL ON BASIS THAT MEMBERS WILL NOT BE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO CANADIAN PUBLIC, AND UPPER HOUSE WILL DELAY AND COMPLICATE ALREADY DIFFICULT JOB OF PASSING WORTHWHILE LEGISLATION.
ENDERS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, LEGISLATIVE BILLS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978OTTAWA03127
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780259-0481
Format: TEL
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780635/aaaabell.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 897eb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 OTTAWA 3082
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2265471
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INITIAL REACTION TO CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SOPN, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/897eb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014